

# BETWEEN THE SHEETS

Inside our hotel of the week

**myhotel**, 11-13 Bayley Street, London WC1

➔ **Where and why** Right in the heart of the West End, this is one of the ultra-cool myhotel group, with sister establishments in Chelsea and Brighton. The 78 funky but functional rooms with air con, flatscreen TVs and CD players are Conran-designed, the staff are youthful and friendly, and the service is superb.

The bar, where breakfast is also served, offers beers from Germany, Finland, Italy, the Czech Republic, Singapore, France and Belgium for £3.75, and wine starts at a very reasonable £17.95 a bottle. The cocktails start at £6.50.

If you over-indulge there's a library where you can chill out with the papers or a book, and the Jinja spa for massages and body wraps.

➔ **On the menu** We'd had glowing reports in advance about the hotel's Pinchito restaurant ([www.pinchito.co.uk](http://www.pinchito.co.uk)), where you're welcomed by the bubbly Gaby and her team. And its



One of the funky rooms

reputation is well-deserved, as it was packed out. It serves a stunning selection of Spanish tapas dishes, including braised pork cheeks with pumpkin (£5.50), mackerel fillets with warm potato salad (£6), and hanger steak with paprika (£6.50).

➔ **While you're there** It's a five-minute walk to the British Museum, 10 minutes to Soho and Chinatown, and 15 minutes to theatreland. And you're on the doorstep of shopping meccas Tottenham Court Road and Oxford Street.

The hotel is also in the middle of Fitzrovia, once populated by famous writers and artists. Round the corner in Windmill Street you can have a pint in the Fitzroy Tavern where Dylan Thomas used to sup a gallon or two.

➔ **Wake-up call** Double rooms start from £40.50 per

The deserts of southern Utah have been the backdrop to countless Hollywood classics

John Wayne in John Ford's Western classic *The Searchers*, filmed in Monument Valley



By DOUG MCKINLAY

## Saddle up for a tour of classic Western landscapes

JOHN Wayne may have hung up his stetson 30 years ago and gone to the big corral in the sky, but he's still as large as life here in Utah.

You don't need to go far in this state without bumping into someone who worked with the actor, stabled his horses or just ran errands for him.

This is where he filmed some of the best Westerns in the genre's history - including *Stagecoach*, *Rio Grande*, *She Wore A Yellow Ribbon* and *The Searchers*.

"When he walked on set everyone knew it," remembers Bob Musselman. "He was moody, but still had a good sense of humour."

Musselman, now nearing 70, grew up around Moab, the southern Utah desert town intimately linked with "The Duke" and his Westerns.

His father, Rusty Musselman, was the local prop master and fixer - the man in charge of fitting out film sets for Western moviemakers. It meant young Bob was constantly around the sets and movie stars.

"My mother had a food concession and I was the soda pop boy," he says.

"I would always be running around sets delivering cold drinks. So it only made sense that when a director needed kids for a scene they hired me, my sister and the other kids around here.

"We didn't get paid much, but it was a lot of fun. But that's how it was back then. At one point, maybe the early 1950s, just about the whole town worked in the movie business in some way."

I'm touring this corner of the Wild West in a hire car as part of a Virgin Holidays Movie Landscape Tour that takes you to the heart of an America made famous by Wayne.

Just on the outskirts of Moab, next to the Colorado River and Arches National Park, some of that Hollywood glory that revolved around John Wayne has been preserved.

At the Red Cliffs Lodge, a working ranch and hotel, there's a museum dedicated to showing off movie posters, still photographs and props from more than 100 movies and television ads filmed at the ranch and in the surrounding countryside.

An hour here will arm any Western movie buff with enough information to feel like they were part of the cast. And to top it off, there is a life-size cardboard cut-out of the man himself.

# WAYNE'S WORLD

happy with the name. He preferred being called The Duke, the name of his giant Airedale terrier. And when studio bosses decided Marion wasn't the right handle for a rough-and-ready silver screen cowpoke, John Wayne was bestowed upon him.

Arguably he would never have been the star he was without the director John Ford. It was Ford who cast Wayne as the Ringo Kid in 1939's *Stagecoach* and catapulted the relatively unknown B-movie actor to A-list status.

Another enduring icon to come out of the film was its location - Utah's Monument Valley, a 30,000-acre patch of blood-red earth and towering Navajo sandstone buttes and mesas.

director, it is often his personality they remember, not his movies.

"He was a nervous fella," says Bob Musselman. "He had this odd habit of chewing on his bandana when he was working. He went through at least one a day.

"But it was his temper that really stands out. He would fire people at the drop of a hat and then five minutes later rehire them.

"He had the biggest effect on John Wayne. Whenever he was around Mr Ford, Wayne would become almost like a schoolboy, very deferential and frightened."



Bob Musselman... childhood memories of John Wayne

film at least - but more out of the respect that John Ford had for this land.

the town pulled out all the stops when it came to filmmaking. It was a favourite of



Red Cliffs Lodge... a hotel, a ranch and museum

running around Utah in the 1950s through to the 1990s that the small town of Kanab, in the southwest corner of the state, became known as Little Hollywood.

Like Moab a little further east, the town pulled out all the stops when it came to filmmaking. It was a favourite of

## What's the deal?

**THE 14-night Movie Landscape Tour with Virgin Holidays** starts at £1,125pp based on two adults sharing a standard room including direct scheduled flights with Virgin Atlantic from Gatwick to Las Vegas in January and February and basic car hire. Go to [www.virginholidays.co.uk](http://www.virginholidays.co.uk) or call 0844 557 3860. For further info on Utah go to [www.utah.travel](http://www.utah.travel) or call 0845 602 0574 for a free destination guide.

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# HOMES & holidays

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## WHERE TO FIND WINTER SUN



**KITCHEN**